

IN THE DRAWINGS

Sheet 6 is amended as shown and attached drawing sheet 9 containing FIG. 15B is added.

REMARKS

The above-noted amendments to claims 1 through 25, and the addition of new claims 26 through 48, as well as the submission of revisions to the Specification, are respectfully submitted for entry prior to initiation of the prosecution of this application in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

New FIG. 15B, submitted herewith provides a cross-sectional view of the fastener also shown and described with respect to FIG. 15A which was formerly numbered FIG. 15. No new matter is included in FIG. 15B. Support can be found for this at FIG 15A and paragraphs 55 through 59 on pages 20 through 22 of the Specification.

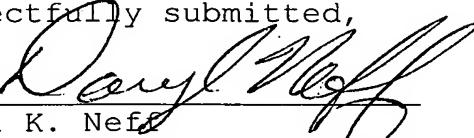
The above-noted new claims and amendments to the claims are respectfully submitted in order to more fully claim the subject matter which applicants consider to constitute their inventive contribution. No new matter is included in these amendments.

In view of the above, it is respectfully requested that these amendments now be entered, and that prosecution on the merits of this application now be initiated. If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe such action can be taken, it is respectfully requested that he telephone Applicants' attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any objections which he may have.

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Applicants' Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

Dated: February 2, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

By   
Daryl K. Nef

Registration No.: 38,253  
LERNER, DAVID, LITTENBERG,  
KRUMHOLZ & MENTLIK, LLP  
600 South Avenue West  
Westfield, New Jersey 07090  
(908) 654-5000  
Attorney for Applicants

459072\_1.DOC



FIG. 15A

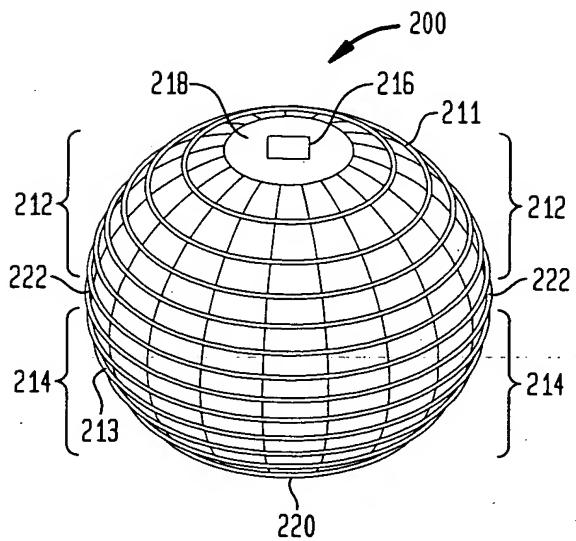


FIG. 16

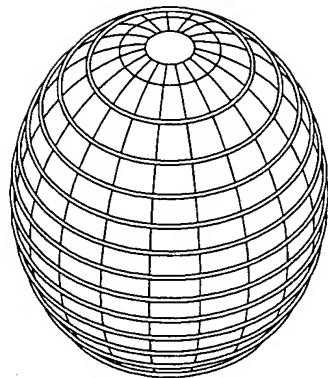


FIG. 17

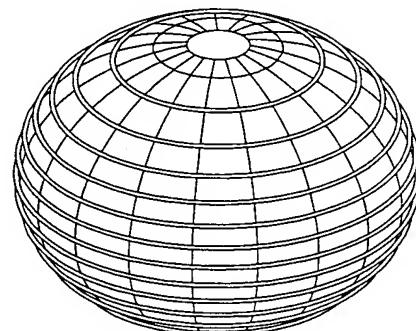


FIG. 15B

